

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jim Costa, D-Fresno, and 48 Members of the bipartisan California Congressional Delegation, including Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, have sent a letter to President Bush, calling on him to immediately issue a Presidential disaster declaration for the 31 counties of California that sustained damage to the state's multi-billion dollar agricultural industry caused by extreme low temperatures.

"It is long past time for the President to take action," Costa said, adding, "Farmers, ranchers, farm workers and communities hit hard by the freeze need the full resources of the federal government behind them now to recover from the damage."

Other Valley Members signing the letter including Congressmen Dennis Cardoza, D-Merced; Kevin McCarthy, R- Bakersfield; Devin Nunes, R- Tulare and George Radanovich, R-Mariposa.

On January 17 the full bipartisan Congressional Delegation sent a letter to Secretary of Agriculture, Mike Johanns, calling for federal assistance for the damage sustained during the crop freeze, resulting in a Secretarial Disaster Declaration for 13 of California's counties.

The full text of the letter is below:

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February 9, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States

The White House
Washington, DC

Mr. President:

As you know, beginning January 11, 2007, California was subjected to extreme cold temperatures, significantly damaging crops throughout the state. As a result, on February 2, 2007, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger requested a Presidential disaster declaration for Alameda, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Imperial, Kern, Kings, Lake, Los Angeles, Madera, Marin, Mendocino, Merced, Monterey, Riverside, Sacramento, San Benito, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Solano, Stanislaus, Tulare, Ventura, Yolo and Yuba counties, as described under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. We write as members of California's bipartisan Congressional delegation to urge your approval of the Governor's request for federal assistance.

The damage associated with extreme low temperatures in California has been devastating to the state's multi-billion dollar agricultural industry. This freeze is especially concerning to California's \$1 billion citrus industry, which provides nearly 95% of the country's fresh citrus supply. In many cases, only a small percentage of citrus crops had been harvested prior to the freeze. As such, approximately 92 million cartons of fruit were on trees and vulnerable during this period of extreme low temperatures. The Central Valley Valencia crop had not even begun harvesting and 70% of the state's lemon and mandarin crops were still on trees.

Some other crops experiencing significant damage include: mango, grapefruit, avocado, lettuce, broccoli, pepper, cauliflower, artichoke and celery. In short, a significant variety of crops over a large geographic area in California were impacted. To date, damages are estimated to exceed \$1.2 billion and this number is only expected to grow as damage assessments continue statewide.

It is important to note that these losses will not only be felt by California farmers. The economic impacts of such a catastrophic freeze will be felt throughout the state. Thousands of hardworking farm workers and their families are now facing job displacement and income loss. The Central Valley citrus industry alone employs 12,000 workers. Unemployment related to the freeze is expected to exceed levels experienced during the freezes of 1990-1991 and 1998-1999 and many displaced workers are already seeking food, clothing, and housing

assistance. Small businesses and rural communities who depend on agribusiness such as restaurants, truckers, and retail suppliers are also being severely impacted and will require extensive economic assistance in order to recover.

At this time, the California Office of Emergency Services, the California Department of Food and Agriculture and other state and local agencies are doing all they can to provide relief. And federal agencies such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Small Business Administration and the Federal Emergency Management Agency have been actively assisting in the disaster recovery process. However, it is clear that the magnitude of this disaster is far beyond the resources of the state and requires the full support of the federal government. Therefore, we strongly support Governor Schwarzenegger's request for a Presidential disaster declaration.

We appreciate your assistance in this important matter and look forward to working with you in response to this disaster.

Sincerely,

Speaker Nancy Pelosi (CA-8)

Sen. Barbara Boxer

Sen. Dianne Feinstein

Rep. Mike Thompson (CA-1)

Rep. Wally Herger (CA-2)

Rep. Daniel Lungren (CA-3)

Rep. John Doolittle (CA-4)

Rep. Doris Matsui (CA-5)

Rep. Lynn Woolsey (CA-6)

Rep. George Miller (CA-7)

Rep. Barbara Lee (CA-9)

Rep. Ellen Tauscher (CA-10)

Rep. Jerry McNerney (CA-11)

Rep. Tom Lantos (CA-12)

Rep. Pete Stark (CA-13)

Rep. Anna Eshoo (CA-14)

Rep. Mike Honda (CA-15)

Rep. Zoe Lofgren (CA-16)

Rep. Sam Farr (CA-17)

Rep. Dennis Cardoza (CA-18)

Rep. George Radanovich (CA-19)

Rep. Jim Costa (CA-20)

Rep. Devin Nunes (CA-21)

Rep. Kevin McCarthy (CA-22)

Rep. Lois Capps (CA-23)

Rep. Howard “Buck” McKeon (CA-25)

Rep. David Dreier (CA-26)

Rep. Brad Sherman (CA-27)

Rep. Howard Berman (CA-28)

Rep. Adam Schiff (CA-29)

Rep. Henry Waxman (CA-30)

Rep. Xavier Becerra (CA-31)

Rep. Hilda Solis (CA-32)

Rep. Diane Watson (CA-33)

Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (CA-34)

Rep. Maxine Waters (CA-35)

Rep. Jane Harman (CA-36)

Rep. Juanita Millender-McDonald (CA-37)

Rep. Grace Napolitano (CA-38)

Rep. Linda Sanchez (CA-39)

Rep. Jerry Lewis (CA-41)

Rep. Joe Baca (CA-43)

Rep. Ken Calvert (CA-44)

Rep. Mary Bono (CA-45)

Rep. Loretta Sanchez (CA-47)

Rep. Darrell Issa (CA-49)

Rep. Bob Filner (CA-51)

Rep. Duncan Hunter (CA-52)

Rep. Susan Davis (CA-53)

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